State of Arizona House of Representatives Forty-seventh Legislature First Regular Session 2005

CHAPTER 277

HOUSE BILL 2534

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 15-761 AND 15-766, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

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43 44 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

Section 1. Section 15-761, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

15-761. <u>Definitions</u>

In this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

- "Autism" means a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction and that affects educational performance. Characteristics irregularities and impairments in communication, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or routines and change in daily unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not include children with characteristics of emotional disability as defined in this section.
- 2. "Child with a disability" means a child who is at least three years but less than twenty-two years of age, who has been evaluated pursuant to section 15-766 and found to have at least one of the following disabilities and who, because of the disability, needs special education and related services:
 - (a) Autism.
 - (b) Emotional disability.
 - (c) Hearing impairment.
 - (d) Other health impairments.
 - (e) Specific learning disability.
 - (f) Mild, moderate or severe mental retardation.
 - (g) Multiple disabilities.
 - (h) Multiple disabilities with severe sensory impairment.
 - (i) Orthopedic impairment.
 - (j) Preschool moderate delay.
 - (k) Preschool severe delay.
 - (1) Preschool speech/language delay.
 - (m) Speech/language impairment.
 - (n) Traumatic brain injury.
 - (o) Visual impairment.
- 3. "DUE PROCESS HEARING" MEANS A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING CONDUCTED BY THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY BY AN IMPARTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAW.
- 3. 4. "Educational disadvantage" means a condition which has limited a child's opportunity for educational experience resulting in a child achieving less than a normal level of learning development.
- 4. 5. "Eligibility for special education" means the pupil must have one of the disabilities contained in paragraph 2 of this section and must also require special education services in order to benefit from an educational program.
 - 5. 6. "Emotional disability":

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- (a) Means a condition whereby a child exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects the child's performance in the educational environment:
- (i) An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors.
- (ii) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- (iii) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
 - (iv) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- (v) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- (b) Includes children who are schizophrenic but does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless they are also determined to have an emotional disability as determined by evaluation as provided in section 15-766.
- 6. "Exceptional child" means a gifted child or a child with a disability.
- 7. "Foster parent" means a person who has been designated by a court of competent jurisdiction to serve as the parent of a child with a disability if that person has an ongoing, long-term parental relationship with the child, is willing to make educational decisions for the child and has no personal interest that would conflict with the interests of the child.
- 8. "Gifted child" means a child who is of lawful school age, who due to superior intellect or advanced learning ability, or both, is not afforded an opportunity for otherwise attainable progress and development in regular classroom instruction and who needs special instruction or special ancillary services, or both, to achieve at levels commensurate with the child's intellect and ability.
- 9. "Hearing impairment" means a loss of hearing acuity, as determined by evaluation pursuant to section 15-766, which interferes with the child's performance in the educational environment and requires the provision of special education and related services.
- 10. "Home school district" means the school district in which the person resides who has legal custody of the child, as provided in section 15-824, subsection B. If the child is a ward of the state and a specific person does not have legal custody of the child, the home school district is the district that the child last attended or, if the child has not previously attended a public school in this state, the school district within which the child currently resides.
- 11. "IMPARTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE" MEANS AN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE OF THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND WHO IS KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE LAWS GOVERNING SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS.

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- 11. 12. "Individualized education program" means a written statement, as defined in 20 United States Code sections 1401 and 1412, for providing special education services to a child with a disability that includes the pupil's present levels of educational performance, the measurable annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks for evaluating progress toward those goals and the specific special education and related services to be provided.
- 12. 13. "Individualized education program team" means a team whose task is to develop an appropriate educational program for the child and that includes:
 - (a) The parent.
 - (b) At least one of the child's regular education teachers.
 - (c) One of the child's special education teachers.
- (d) A representative of the public agency that is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of instruction that is designed specifically for children with disabilities who is knowledgeable about general curriculum and the availability of resources.
- (e) A person who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results.
 - (f) The child, if appropriate.
- (g) At the discretion of the parent or the public agency, other persons with knowledge or special expertise about the child.
- 13. 14. "Mental retardation" means a significant impairment of general intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and that adversely affects the child's performance in the educational environment.
- 14. 15. "Mild mental retardation" means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior between two and three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age.
- 15. 16. "Moderate mental retardation" means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior between three and four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age.
- 16. 17. "Multidisciplinary evaluation team" means a team of persons including individuals described as the individualized education program team and other qualified professionals who shall determine whether a child is eligible for special education.
- 17. 18. "Multiple disabilities" means learning and developmental problems resulting from multiple disabilities as determined by evaluation pursuant to section 15-766 that cannot be provided for adequately in a program designed to meet the needs of children with less complex disabilities. Multiple disabilities include any of the following conditions that require the provision of special education and related services:
 - (a) Two or more of the following conditions:
 - (i) Hearing impairment.
 - (ii) Orthopedic impairment.

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- (iii) Moderate mental retardation.
- (iv) Visual impairment.
- (b) A child with a disability listed in subdivision (a) of this paragraph existing concurrently with a condition of mild mental retardation, emotional disability or specific learning disability.
- 18. 19. "Multiple disabilities with severe sensory impairment" means multiple disabilities that include at least one of the following:
- (a) Severe visual impairment or severe hearing impairment in combination with another severe disability.
 - (b) Severe visual impairment and severe hearing impairment.
- 19. 20. "Orthopedic impairment" means one or more severe orthopedic impairments and includes those that are caused by congenital anomaly, disease and other causes, such as amputation or cerebral palsy, and that adversely affect a child's performance in the educational environment.
- 20. 21. "Other health impairments" means limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, due to chronic or acute health problems which adversely affect a pupil's educational performance.
- 21. 22. "Out-of-home care" means the placement of a child with a disability outside of the home environment and includes twenty-four hour residential care, group care or foster care on either a full-time or part-time basis.
- 22. 23. "Parent" means the natural or adoptive parent of a child, the legal guardian of a child, a relative with whom a child resides and who is acting as the parent of that child, a surrogate parent who has been appointed for a child pursuant to section 15-763.01 or a foster parent as defined in this section:
 - (a) EITHER A NATURAL OR ADOPTIVE PARENT OF A CHILD.
- (b) A GUARDIAN, BUT NOT THIS STATE IF THE CHILD IS A WARD OF THIS STATE.
- (c) A PERSON ACTING IN THE PLACE OF A NATURAL OR ADOPTIVE PARENT WITH WHOM THE CHILD LIVES OR A PERSON WHO IS LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHILD'S WELFARE.
 - (d) A SURROGATE PARENT.
 - (e) A FOSTER PARENT TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY STATE LAW.
- . 24. "Preschool child" means a child who is at least three years of age but who has not reached the required age for kindergarten, subject to section 15-771, subsection G.
- 24. 25. "Preschool moderate delay" means performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced test that measures at least one and one-half, but not more than three, standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in two or more of the following areas:
 - (a) Cognitive development.
 - (b) Physical development.
 - (c) Communication development.

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- (d) Social or emotional development.
- (e) Adaptive development.

The results of the norm-referenced measure must be corroborated by information from a comprehensive developmental assessment and from parental input, if available, as measured by a judgment based assessment or survey. If there is a discrepancy between the measures, the evaluation team shall determine eligibility based on a preponderance of the information presented.

25. 26. "Preschool severe delay" means performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced test that measures more than three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in one or more of the following areas:

- (a) Cognitive development.
- (b) Physical development.
- (c) Communication development.
- (d) Social or emotional development.
- (e) Adaptive development.

The results of the norm-referenced measure must be corroborated by information from a comprehensive developmental assessment and from parental input, if available, as measured by a judgment based assessment or survey. If there is a discrepancy between the measures, the evaluation team shall determine eligibility based on a preponderance of the information presented.

26. 27. "Preschool speech/language delay" means performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced language test that measures at least one and one-half standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age or whose speech, out of context, is unintelligible to a listener who is unfamiliar with the child. Eligibility under this paragraph is appropriate only if a comprehensive developmental assessment or norm-referenced assessment and parental input indicate that the child is not eligible for services under another preschool category. The evaluation team shall determine eligibility based on a preponderance of the information presented.

27. 28. "Prior written notice" means notice, as defined in 20 United States Code sections 1414 and 1415, that includes a description of the action proposed or refused by the school, an explanation of why the school proposes or refuses to take the action, a description of any options the school considered and the reasons why those options were rejected, a description of each evaluation procedure, test, record or report the school used as a basis for the proposal or refusal, a description of any other factors that were relevant to the school's proposal or refusal, a full explanation of all of the procedural safeguards available to the parent and a listing of sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the notice.

29. "PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY" MEANS A SCHOOL DISTRICT, A CHARTER SCHOOL, AN ACCOMMODATION SCHOOL, A STATE SUPPORTED INSTITUTION OR ANY OTHER

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POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THIS STATE THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING EDUCATION TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

- 28. 30. "Related services" means those supportive services, as defined in 20 United States Code section 1401, that are required to assist a child with a disability who is eligible to receive special education services in order for the child to benefit from special education.
- 29. 31. "Residential special education placement" means the placement of a child with a disability in a public or private residential program, as provided in section 15-765, subsection G, in order to provide necessary special education and related services as specified in the child's individualized education program.
- 30. "Severe mental retardation" means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior measures at least four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age.
- 31. "Special education" means the adjustment of the environmental factors, modification of the course of study and adaptation of teaching methods, materials and techniques to provide educationally for those children who are gifted or disabled to such an extent that they need specially designed instruction in order to receive educational benefit. Difficulty in writing, speaking or understanding the English language due to an environmental background wherein a language other than English is spoken primarily or exclusively shall not be considered a disability that requires special education.
- 32. 34. "Special education referral" means a written request for an evaluation to determine whether a pupil is eligible for special education services that, for referrals not initiated by a parent, includes documentation of appropriate efforts to educate the pupil in the regular education program.
 - 33. 35. "Specific learning disability":
- (a) Means a specific learning disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.
- (b) Includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and aphasia.
- (c) Does not include learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, motor or emotional disabilities, of mental retardation or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.
- 34. 36. "Speech/language impairment" means a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, severe disorders of syntax, semantics or vocabulary, or functional language skills, or a voice impairment, as determined by evaluation pursuant to section 15-766, to the extent that it calls attention to itself, interferes with communication or causes a child to be maladjusted.

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- 37. "STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY" MEANS THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.
- 35. 38. "State placing agency" has the same meaning prescribed in section 15–1181.
- 36. 39. "Surrogate parent" means a person who has been appointed by the court pursuant to section 15-763.01 in order to represent a child in decisions regarding special education.
 - 37. 40. "Traumatic brain injury":
- (a) Means an acquired injury to the brain that is caused by an external physical force and that results in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects educational performance.
- (b) Applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in mild, moderate or severe impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing and speech.
- (c) Does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.
- 38. 41. "Visual impairment" means a loss in visual acuity or a loss of visual field, as determined by evaluation pursuant to section 15-766, that interferes with the child's performance in the educational environment and that requires the provision of special education and related services.
 - Sec. 2. Section 15-766, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read: 15-766. Evaluation of child for placement in special education program; due process hearing procedures
- A. A special education referral shall be made under the direction of the chief administrative official of the school district or county, or such person officially designated as responsible for special education, after consultation with the parent or guardian.
- B. Before a child who is suspected of having a disability is placed in a special education program, an evaluation shall be made of the capabilities and limitations of the child. A reevaluation shall be conducted at least every three years to determine if the disability remains and to determine continued placement in a special education program. The evaluation and reevaluations shall be made by a multidisciplinary evaluation team under the direction of the chief administrative official of the school district or county or such person officially designated as responsible for special education. The team shall review existing evaluation data and shall collect additional data, if necessary, to determine the eligibility of the pupil for special education and to develop an appropriate individual education program. The school district or county may conduct joint evaluations, directly or indirectly with the department of economic security, the department of health services, the department of juvenile corrections and the juvenile courts, or the school district may contract with any state agency or

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 department for all or a portion of the components of the evaluations required by this section. The determination of eligibility for special education services is solely the responsibility of the multidisciplinary evaluation team. The evaluation pursuant to this section shall contain in writing, but is not limited to:

- 1. A review of current evaluations, including types of tests and the results of those tests.
- 2. Information provided by the parents, including medical and developmental information and history.
- 3. Educational history, including the reason for the referral, current classroom based assessments and observations by teachers and related service providers.
- 4. Documentation of whether the child's educational problems are related to or resulting primarily from reasons of educational disadvantage.
- 5. A determination of whether the child has a category of disability as defined PRESCRIBED in section 15-761.
- 6. The child's present levels of academic performance and current educational needs.
- 7. A determination of whether the child needs special education and related services.
- 8. A determination of whether any additions or modifications are needed to allow the child to progress in the general curriculum.
- C. The results of the evaluation shall be submitted in writing and with recommendations to the chief administrative official of the school district or county or to such person designated by the chief administrative official as responsible for special education.
- D. Any of the evaluation components that are enumerated in subsection B of this section, that are less than three years old and that are appropriate to consider under the specific circumstances may be shared by and among state agencies for the purpose of expediting completion of the evaluation and placement process.
- E. The chief administrative official of the school district or county or the person officially designated as responsible for special education shall place the child, based upon the consensus recommendation of the individualized education program team and subject to due process pursuant to 20 United States Code section 1415, except that a child shall not be placed in a special education program without the approval of the child's parent or guardian, or retained in such a program without actual notice to the parent or guardian. Placement may be made or changed pursuant to a hearing officer's decision under 20 United States Code section 1415 or an order from a court of competent jurisdiction. The state board of education shall adopt rules to provide a parent or guardian the opportunity to appeal the selection of a specific hearing officer. The state board of education shall adopt rules prescribing minimum standards for hearing officers and prescribing training requirements for hearing officers.

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- F. THE DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES PRESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION EXTEND TO THE PARENTS OF A CHILD, A STUDENT WHO HAS REACHED THE AGE OF MAJORITY OR THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY OR AGENCIES INVOLVED IN ANY DECISIONS REGARDING THE STUDENT. ALL DUE PROCESS HEARINGS SHALL BE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS GOVERNING THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH KNOWN OR SUSPECTED DISABILITIES. THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL ADOPT RULES FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS SECTION THAT COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:
- 1. THE PARENT, THE ADULT STUDENT OR THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY OR AGENCIES MAY INITIATE DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES UNDER EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:
- (a) THERE IS A PROPOSAL TO INITIATE OR CHANGE THE IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION OR EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT OF THE CHILD, OR THE PROVISION OF A FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION TO THE CHILD.
- (b) THERE IS A REFUSAL TO INITIATE OR CHANGE THE IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION OR EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT OF THE CHILD, OR THE PROVISION OF A FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION TO THE CHILD.
- 2. EITHER THE PARENT, THE ADULT STUDENT OR THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY OR AGENCIES MAY INITIATE A DUE PROCESS HEARING BY SUBMITTING A WRITTEN REQUEST TO THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY OR THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY INVOLVED IN ANY DECISIONS REGARDING THE STUDENT. THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY SHALL PROVIDE A MODEL FORM THAT ANY PARTY MAY USE IN REQUESTING A DUE PROCESS HEARING. THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY SHALL PROMPTLY FORWARD ANY REQUESTS RECEIVED TO THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. ANY REQUEST RECEIVED BY THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY SHALL BE TRANSMITTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS AND THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.
- 3. A DECISION MADE IN A HEARING CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL BE FINAL, EXCEPT THAT ANY PARTY INVOLVED IN A HEARING MAY BRING A CIVIL ACTION IN ANY COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION WITHOUT REGARD TO THE AMOUNT IN CONTROVERSY.
- G. THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY SHALL PAY ALL COSTS INCURRED BY THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS ASSOCIATED WITH ANY HEARING CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION AND THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY OR A PUBLIC AGENCY POOL OPERATED PURSUANT TO SECTION 11-952.01 IN WHICH THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PARTICIPATES SHALL CONTRACT WITH THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS FOR THIS PURPOSE.
- H. TITLE 41, CHAPTER 6, ARTICLE 10 SHALL APPLY TO ALL HEARINGS TO THE EXTENT NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THIS SECTION AND FEDERAL AND STATE LAW REGARDING THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR MAY 9, 2005.

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE MAY 10, 2005.

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Passed the House Tebruary 28	_,20 <u><i>05</i></u>	Passed the Senat	e	april /2	,20_05,
by the following vote: 42	Ayes,	by the following	vote:	30	Ayes,
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HOUSE FINAL PASSAGE as per Joint Conference	SENATE FINAL PASSAGE as per Joint Conference
Passed the House	Passed the Senate May 2, 20 <u>05</u>
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Speaker of the House	President of the Senate
Speaker of the House Pro Tempore Marse	Olan De Marie
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	Secretary of State